

Message Text

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SUBJ: REACTION TO BICENTENNIAL

REF: STATE 169682

1. THE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION IN BOLIVIA WAS DEFINITELY A MAJOR SUCCESS, REFLECTING THE AFFECTION AND ESTEEM IN WHICH THE UNITED STATES, AND ESPECIALLY ITS DEMOCRATIC AND OPEN SOCIETY VALUES, ARE HELD BY BOLIVIA'S PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LEADERS, AND BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC. SYMBOLIC OF THIS HIGH REGARD WAS PRESIDENT BANZER'S APPEARANCE AT THE EMBASSY'S BIRTH OF JULY CELEBRATION. HE CAME EARLY, STAYED TO TAKE HIS TURN RINGING THE LIBERTY BELL AT 2:00 O'CLOCK AND SEEMED TO THOROUGHLY ENJOY AND APPRECIATE THE EVENT AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE. PRESS COVERAGE WAS ALSO EXCELLENT. THE THREE MAJOR LA PAZ DAILIES CARRIED POSITIVE EDITORIALS AND SPECIAL SECTIONS ON THE BICENTENNIAL. OVER THE FOLLOWING WEEK MISSION MEMBERS RECEIVED WARM EXPRESSIONS OF CONGRATULATIONS FROM BOLIVIAN FRIENDS AND FROM THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS.

2. PERHAPS MOST STRIKING, HOWEVER, WERE THE COMMENTS MANY BOLIVIANs MADE ABOUT THE US AS THE STANDARD-BEARER OF FREEDOM AND JUSTICE FOR ALL MANKIND, NOT ONLY IN THE PAST, BUT FOR THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE. WHILE BOLIVIANs ARE HIGHLY CONSCIOUS OF OUR POWER AND RICHNESS, AND PERHAPS ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS THIS ASPECT DOMINATES THEIR THINKING ABOUT US, IT WAS TO

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THE IDEALS OF OUR PEOPLE AND OUR SYSTEM WHICH BOLIVIANs

PAID TRIBUTE DURING THIS PAST WEEK AND OF THE NEED FOR THE UNITED STATES TO CONTINUE USING ITS POWER AND RESOURCES TO MAINTAIN AND PROMOTE THESE VALUES IN THE WORLD. OUR DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND OUR CONSTITUTION WERE CITED AS EXPRESSIONS OF MAN'S FUNDAMENTAL LIBERTIES, AND AS PROVIDING A STRUCTURE FOR CREATING, AS ONE NEWSPAPER PUT IT, "A SOCIETY WHICH MOST APPROXIMATES THE HUMAN IDEAL OF CONSTRUCTING IN LIBERTY A PROGRESSIVE SOCIETY."

3. WE THINK THE US CAN TAKE PRIDE IN THE EFFECT OUR 200 YEARS OF LIBERTY HAS UPON A SMALL, STRUGGLING NATION LIKE BOLIVIA. A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF BOLIVIANS APPRECIATE THE NEED THEIR COUNTRY HAS FOR POLITICAL STABILITY TO MODERNIZE ECONOMICALLY AND SOCIALLY, AND FOR THE TIME BEING MANY ARE WILLING TO EXIST UNDER A DE FACTO MILITARY REGIME. AT THE SAME TIME, THE COMMENTS ON OUR BICENTENNIAL HAVE BROUGHT HOME TO US THAT MANY BOLIVIANS, INCLUDING MANY IN THE MILITARY, LOOK FORWARD TO THE RETURN TO A PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY. THEY SEE THE UNITED STATES AS PROFF THAT OUR SYSTEM WORKS AND OUR PEOPLE PROPSE AND THEY LOOK TO US AS A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION AND HELP IN THEIR OWN QUEST FOR A BETTER SOCIETY.
STEDMAN

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